

Where can I get more information?
<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/home-and-community-services/adult-abuse-and-prevention>

Contact APS for reports on allegations of abuse, abandonment, neglect, self-neglect and financial exploitation of vulnerable adults living in the community and in facilities.

If you think someone may be in imminent danger or needs urgent help, call 911 immediately!

Online reporting is accessible and available 24 hours a day and APS intake phone lines are available Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. with the ability to leave a message before and after hours. Please contact the area in which the victim resides.

For online reporting:
<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/altsa/reportadultabuse>

Regional Intake Phone Lines

COUNTY	APS CONTACT
Adams, Asotin, Benton, Chelan, Columbia, Douglas, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Kittitas, Klickitat, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, Whitman, Yakima	1-800-459-0421 (TTY) 509-568-3086
Island, King, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom	1-866-221-4909 (TTY) 1-800-833-6384
Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Kitsap, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, Pierce, Skamania, Thurston, Wahkiakum	1-877-734-6277 (TTY) 360-664-9469

Adult Protective Services

Reporting Suspected Abuse, Neglect, Self-Neglect or Financial Exploitation of Vulnerable Adults

What does Adult Protective Services do?

Adult Protective Services’ (APS) primary responsibility is to receive and investigate allegations of abuse (physical, mental, sexual, and personal exploitation), abandonment, neglect, financial exploitation, and self-neglect of vulnerable adults living in their own homes and in facilities.

Receiving help from DSHS is an individual’s choice. Vulnerable adults must consent to services and be informed of the right to accept or refuse services. DSHS cannot remove adults from their residence or place them in a different residence against their wishes.

What is abuse?
Abuse may include intentional or neglectful acts that cause or lead to injury. Abuse can occur anywhere and can happen to anyone. Men and women from all ethnic, social, and economic backgrounds can be victimized. *Perpetrators can be strangers, caregivers, family members, friends, or others.*

- What are some types of abuse?**
- Abandonment
 - Financial Exploitation
 - Improper use of Chemical/Physical/Mechanical Restraints
 - Neglect
 - Physical
 - Self-Neglect
 - Sexual
 - Verbal/Psychological/Emotional

Everyone has a shared responsibility in preventing and reporting abuse of vulnerable adults in Washington State

Who is considered a Vulnerable Adult?

An adult 60 years or older who has the functional, mental, or physical inability to care for him or herself is considered a vulnerable adult. Other adults considered vulnerable are 18 years or older and:

- Have a legal guardian.
- Have a developmental disability.
- Admitted to any facility.
- Receive in-home services through a licensed home health, hospice, or home care agency.
- Receive services from an individual provider.
- Have a personal aide who performs care under his/her direction for compensation.

What are some warning signs of adult abuse?

Warning signs may include a variety of behaviors and physical indicators that can be obvious or subtle. *If you suspect abuse report it.*

OBVIOUS WARNING SIGNS OF ADULT ABUSE	SUBTLE WARNING SIGNS OF ADULT ABUSE
INJURIES Suspicious or unexplainable bruises, sores, or weight loss.	ISOLATING Individuals are kept from or are absent from normal activities with family, friends, or social events.
BEHAVIORS OR EMOTIONS Change in normal personality.	MISSED OR CANCELLED APPOINTMENTS Regular appointments, such as medical or professional, are stopped without communication.
DAILY LIVING NEEDS Neglect or inattention to hygiene, clothing, medication, food, or home.	SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF UNKNOWN INDIVIDUALS OR PREVIOUSLY UNINVOLVED RELATIVES New individual(s) become involved and take over personal and financial matters.
PROPERTY AND FINANCES Unexplainable financial changes or missing money and personal belongings.	IRRATIONAL EXCUSES OR EXPLANATIONS Individual or caretaker explanation of behaviors or physical indicators don't make sense.
VERBAL AGGRESSION Comments or statements that are intimidating, threatening, or degrading.	

What happens when an Adult Protective Service report is made?

When you report, you will be asked:

- For your name and contact information
- The names and contact information of the vulnerable adult and the person you think is causing the harm.
- To share what you know about the situation, a description of the concern or what is occurring or what happened.
- For names and the contact information of other individuals who can provide information about the situation.
- If you know of any safety concerns.

What happens after I report:

- An unannounced visit will be attempted with the individual.
- DSHS (APS) will report suspected crimes to law enforcement.

What else is important to know?

- If you report in good faith, you have immunity from liability.
- Your name and information about the vulnerable adult is confidential (public disclosure and other state and federal regulations apply).
- Reports can be suspicions or observations. You do not need to prove abuse is occurring when making a report.
- APS is unable to share contents of an investigation.

What can Washington citizens do to protect Vulnerable Adults from abuse?

Health and safety is everyone’s responsibility. Everybody has a role to prevent and report abuse of vulnerable adults. Reporting is a partnership. APS relies on family, friends, neighbors, and community members to report abuse.

VISIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain contact with vulnerable adults in your family and community.• Share DSHS contact information and reassure individuals help is available.
RAISE AWARENESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk with your family and community about APS and how to report abuse.• Invite APS to share information in your community.
SUPPORT CAREGIVERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage caregivers of vulnerable adults to practice self-care and take necessary breaks or respite from caregiving.
REPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Never assume someone else has already made a report.• Recognize adult abuse warning signs and report to APS.

Who is a Mandated Reporter and what is required of them?

Mandated Reporters are individuals who, as a result of their profession or employment, are more likely to become aware of vulnerable adult abuse. Mandated Reporters are required to report abuse; it is Washington State Law RCW 74.34.020. Some Mandated Reporters include DSHS Employees, Individual Providers, Law Enforcement, Medical Professionals, and Social Workers.

- In Washington state, Mandated Reporters can be penalized for failure to report suspected abuse [RCW 74.34.053].
- Report immediately if you have reasonable cause to believe that a vulnerable adult is being harmed, you do not need proof of harm [RCW 74.34.035].
- Report suspected **physical** or **sexual assault** to both law enforcement and DSHS [RCW 74.34.035].
- Report immediately to the coroner or medical examiner, law enforcement, and DSHS if you suspect a death was caused by abuse, neglect or abandonment [RCW 74.34.035] [RCW 68.50.020].

